



Drought Update

Friday, October 16, 2015

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK

- **Californians Cut Water Usage by Nearly 27% in August:** On October 1, the State Water Board [reported](#) that Californians reduced water usage by 27 percent during the month of August, surpassing Governor Brown's 25 percent conservation mandate for the third consecutive month. For June, July, and August the cumulative statewide savings rate was 28.7%, which equates to 611,566 acre-feet of water saved.

In order to reach California's goal of 1.2 million acre-feet of water saved by February 2016, the State Water Board advises residents to continue their great efforts of water conservation during the fall and winter months.

- **\$1 Million in Agriculture Water Management Plan Funding Available to Mid-Sized Suppliers:** On October 8, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) [began](#) accepting applications for the 2015 Agricultural Water Management Grants. The grant is a non-competitive grant program funded by Proposition 50 and is planned to assist mid-sized agricultural water suppliers comply with Governor Brown's April 1 [Executive Order](#). For more information regarding the grants and the application package, visit DWR's [Water Use Efficiency Grants and Loans](#) webpage.
- **DWR Working to Remove Temporary Emergency Drought Barrier on West False River:** On October 1, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) [announced](#) the removal of the temporary emergency drought barrier located in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, anticipating the barrier to be completely dismantled by mid-November 2015. DWR stated that the cranes have already removed 22,000 tons of rock on the downstream side of the barrier to allow for water flow.

Due to the severe drought conditions, DWR installed a 750-foot rock barrier on the West False River in June to combat the intrusion of saltwater and protect drinking water in the Delta. The barrier also helped to preserve cold water in upstream reservoirs and keep young salmon cool enough to live and thrive downstream.

- **DWR Releases Proposed SGMA Basin Boundary Emergency Regulations:** On October 8, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) [released](#) its proposed Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Basin Boundary Emergency Regulations. DWR is required to adopt emergency regulations that will comply with Water Code 10722.2 by January 1, 2016.

The emergency regulations will be submitted for approval to the California Water Commission on October 21. For more information on the emergency regulations or California's existing groundwater basin and subbasins, visit DWR's [Groundwater](#) webpage.

- **DWR to Host Public Workshops on Draft PSP for Proposition 1 Agricultural Water Use Efficiency Grants:** On October 5, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) [announced](#) they will host three public seminars in November to receive feedback on its newly released Draft Agricultural Water Use Efficiency 2015 Grants Proposition 1 Guidelines and Proposal Solicitation Package ([PSP](#)). The workshops will address the draft PSP, application requirements, submittal process, and criteria for project selection.

Through the competitive grant program, public water agencies may apply for \$30 million dollars in available Proposition 1 funds for agricultural water use efficiency projects including, but not limited to: construction projects, technical assistance, feasibility studies and public outreach. For more information, visit DWR's [Water Use Efficiency Grants and Loans](#) webpage.

- **CVP Begins Water Year 2016 with Less Water than the Start of 2015:** On October 1, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) [announced](#) that the Central Valley Project (CVP) will begin the 2016 water year with 2.9 million acre-feet of water in Shasta, Trinity, Folsom, New Melones and Millerton reservoirs, and the federal share of the joint federal/state San Luis Reservoir. This is 200,000 acre-feet less than what was stored at the beginning of the water year of 2015.

In January 2016, Reclamation will announce a preliminary assessment of the water supply conditions. In February, Reclamation will announce the initial CVP water supply to be made available under contracts. For more information on storage, visit Reclamation's [Central Valley Operations Office](#) webpage.

- **CWC Releases Revised “Working Draft” of Water Storage Investment Program Regulations:** On October 6, the California Water Commission (CWC) [released](#) a revised [working draft](#) of the regulations for the Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP). This program will be used to allocate \$2.7 billion in Proposition 1, Chapter 8 funds dedicated to help fund water storage projects. CWC will also hold [a series of meetings](#) throughout the state to provide additional information on the program.
- **California’s Water Conservation Education Program Campaign:** This past week, Save Our Water began wrapping up the TV spots on major network television, and continue to look for additional opportunities to extend the campaign in coordination with their media partners. The [press release](#) last week which announced the launch of the “Stepping Up” and “Helping Hands” commercials addressing the August conservation figures are continued to be heavily promoted on social media channels.

Save Our Water and their partnership with [Plant California](#) and [California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers](#) continue the fall landscape focus on tree care and planting guides in order to develop a “water smart” community of California-friendly gardening. In addition, there has been a continued push on the Save Our Water Rebate website on social media promoting the “[Claim your Turf Replacement](#)” rebate, and “[Claim Your Toilet](#)” rebate. For more tips and tools to help conserve water and keep trees healthy during the drought, please visit Save Our Water’s website, which is available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), or connect with the program on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought. During the October 8 meeting, the Task Force reviewed in detail the current State responses to the Valley and Butte Fires.

In addition, the Labor Workforce Development Agency announced that the Drought Temporary Jobs program has enrolled 300 participants at 81 worksite projects in 18 counties. The program is funded through the Department of Labor's National Dislocated Worker Grant program which offers 6 months of employment on drought-related public works projects for up to 1,000 workers affected by the drought.

ONGOING DROUGHT SUPPORT

- **Emergency Food Aid, Utility and Employment Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) Drought Food Assistance Program (DFAP) provides food assistance to affected communities that suffer high levels of unemployment from the drought. To date, over 923,140 boxes have been provided to community food banks in drought-impacted counties, with an average of approximately 13,250 food boxes per week since June 2014. Approximately 831,765 boxes of food have been picked up by 435,908 households.

Food boxes distributions vary by county and occur 1-4 times per month. Nearly 62% of the food distributions have occurred in the Tulare Basin (Fresno, Kern, Kings and Tulare). There are 10,800 boxes scheduled for delivery for the week ending October 16 to Fresno, Kern, Merced, San Luis Obispo, Stanislaus, and Tulare counties.

The Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) allocated an additional \$600,000, under the federally-funded Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), to continue the [Drought Water Assistance Program \(DWAP\)](#) which provides financial assistance to help low-income families pay their water bills. As of October 2, CSD has reported that a total of \$509,176 has been issued to 2,534 households.

CSD is in the process of allocating \$400,000, under CSBG, to continue the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) drought assistance program, which provides assistance in employment training and placement services to individuals impacted by the drought. This program provides employment training and placement services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers suffering job loss or reduced employment due to the drought. To date, CSD has reported that a total of \$77,814 has been issued to the Center for Employment Training, California Human Development, Central Valley Opportunity Center, and Proteus with 35 participants enrolled.

In response to California's historic drought, CSD has received \$7.5 million in General Fund to implement the Drought Emergency Assistance Program (DEAP) to provide emergency relief and support services to drought-impacted individuals and their families and households. As of October 2, CSD has reported that a total of \$1,281,874 has been issued to 1094 households.

- **Drought Response Funding:** The \$687 million in state drought funding that was appropriated last March through emergency legislation, as well as \$142 million provided in the 2014 Budget Act, continues to advance toward meeting critical needs. To date, \$468 million has been committed, and nearly \$625 million of the emergency funds appropriated in March came from sources dedicated to capital improvements to water systems. Since March, the Department of Water Resources has expedited grant approvals, getting \$21 million immediately allocated to grantees that were pre-approved for certain projects.

As planned in March, the next \$200 million of expedited capital funding was awarded in October, and the remaining \$250 million will be granted by fall 2015. The 2014 Budget Act appropriated an additional \$53.8 million to CAL FIRE over its typical budget to enhance firefighter surge capacity and retain seasonal firefighters beyond the typical fire season.

As a result of continuing drought conditions, emergency legislation was enacted in March 2015 that appropriated over \$1 billion of additional funds for drought-related projects and activities. The Administration's May Revision proposal includes an additional \$2.2 billion for programs that protect and expand local water supplies, improve water conservation, and provide immediate relief to impacted communities.

CURRENT DROUGHT CONDITIONS

- **Fire Activity:** Since the beginning of the year, firefighters from CAL FIRE and the US Forest Service have responded to over 7,524 wildfires across the state, burning 814,485 acres. Fire activity across California remains high with nearly 159 combined wildfires in just the past week.
- **CAL FIRE Suspends Outdoor Residential Burning:** California's increased fire activity this year, coupled with record-setting drought conditions, has caused CAL FIRE to [suspend burn permits](#) in all counties in the State Responsibility Area.
- **Dry Well Reports:** With California in its fourth year of a severe, hot drought, the Governor's Drought Task Force continues to monitor and identify communities and local water systems in danger of running out of water. Recently, a cross-agency team, led by DWR, developed a new system that improves and streamlines data collection and reporting for [household water shortages](#) for California water systems with fewer than 15 household connections.

As of October 7, approximately 2,502 wells statewide have been identified as critical or dry, which affects an estimated 12,510 residents. Cal OES has reported that 2,355 of the 2,502 dry wells are concentrated in the inland regions within the Central Valley. If you are experiencing a water supply shortage, please [submit a report](#) on DWR's website.

- **Vulnerable Water Systems:** The State Water Board continues to provide technical and funding assistance to several communities facing drinking water shortages, and is monitoring water systems across the state. Since January 2014, 98 out of the 135 projects approved to receive emergency funding for interim replacement drinking water have been executed.

On May 19, the State Water Board adopted Guidelines for administering the latest emergency drought appropriations of \$19 million announced this past March. To date, the State Water Board has received requests for \$5 million of those funds.

- **Projected Reservoir Management:** Shasta Reservoir recorded 1,538,785 acre-feet (AF) on October 8 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 5,629 AF/day. Releases are being held lower than normal to keep cold water in the reservoir for Winter Run Chinook Salmon later in the fall. This is higher than the 1976-77 record low storage of 700,000 AF.

Oroville Reservoir recorded 1,051,082 AF on October 8 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 5,629 AF/day. Releases are low for water supply conservation but are moderated to keep salt water from coming too far into the Delta and to meet other joint Federal-State obligations. Oroville Reservoir is projected to reach 900,000 AF by the end of September. This storage is about the same as the record low 1976-77 storage level.

Folsom Reservoir recorded 1,051,082 AF on October 8 with a 10-day average reduction in storage of 514 AF/day. Releases are low for water supply conservation but are moderated to keep salt water from coming too far into the Delta and to meet other joint Federal-State obligations.

[Reservoir Levels](#) as of October 15 remain low, including: Castaic Lake 31% of capacity (40% of year to date average); Don Pedro 31% of capacity (47% of average); Exchequer 8% of capacity (18% of average); Folsom Lake 17% of capacity (31% of average); Lake Oroville 29% of capacity (48% of average); Lake Perris 36% (47% of average); Millerton Lake 35% of capacity (90% of average); New Melones 11% of capacity (20% of average); Pine Flat 12% of capacity (34% of average); San Luis 18% of capacity (35% of average); Lake Shasta 33% of capacity (56% of average); and Trinity Lake 21% of capacity (32% of average). An update of water levels at other [smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

Weather Outlook: Hot and dry weather continues through at least midweek, approaching records. A weather system moving up from southern California may bring a few showers to Sierra Nevada late Wednesday into Thursday before a frontal system brings widespread shower chances over the weekend.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 61 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **27 Counties:** Butte, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Inyo, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Plumas, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba.

- **13 Cities:** City of Live Oak (Sutter County), City of Lodi (San Joaquin County), City of Manteca (San Joaquin County), City of Montague (Siskiyou County), City of Porterville (Tulare County), City of Portola (Plumas County), City of Ripon (San Joaquin County), City of San Juan Bautista (San Benito County), City of Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara County), City of Rancho Cucamonga (San Bernardino County), City of West Sacramento (Yolo County), City of Willits (Mendocino County) and the City of Fort Bragg (Mendocino County).
- **9 Tribes:** Cortina Indian Rancheria (Colusa County), Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou/Humboldt Counties), Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria (Sonoma County), Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians (Madera County) Sherwood Valley Pomo Indian Tribe (Mendocino County), Tule River Indian Tribe (Tulare County), Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation (Yolo County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt County)
- **12 Special Districts:** Carpinteria Valley Water District (Santa Barbara County), Goleta Water District (Santa Barbara County), Groveland Community Services District (Tuolumne County), Lake Don Pedro Community Services District (Mariposa Stanislaus County), Mariposa Public Utility District (Mariposa County), Meiners Oaks Water District (Ventura County), Montecito Water District (Santa Barbara County), Mountain House Community Service District (San Joaquin County), Nevada Irrigation District (Nevada County), Placer County Water Agency (Placer County), Tuolumne Utilities District (Tuolumne County), and Twain Harte Community Services District (Tuolumne County).
- **Water Agency Conservation Efforts:** The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) [has identified](#) several hundred local water agencies that have implemented water conservation actions. These water agencies [are responding to the drought](#) by implementing conservation programs, which include voluntary calls for reduced water usage and mandatory restrictions where water shortages are worst.

ACWA [released](#) a Drought Response Toolkit to assist water agencies as they take action to meet state-mandated water conservation target and communicate information about water use restrictions, enforcement and other issues with their customers, media and other audiences

- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 33 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Solano, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.
- **Tribal Taskforce:** A total of 7 tribes have established drought task forces to coordinate tribal drought response. These tribes include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Hopland Tribe (Mendocino County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou County), La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians (San Diego County), Sherwood Valley Tribe (Mendocino County), Trinidad Tribe (Humboldt County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt and Del Norte County).

DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

[Drought.CA.Gov](#): California's Drought Information Clearinghouse

State's Water Conservation Campaign, [Save Our Water](#)
Local Government, [Drought Clearinghouse and Toolkit](#)

California Department of Food and Agriculture, [Drought Information](#)
California Department of Water Resources, [Current Water Conditions](#)
California Data Exchange Center, [Snow Pack/Water Levels](#)
California State Water Resources Control Board, Water Rights, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
California Natural Resources Agency, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
State Water Resources Control Board, Drinking Water, [SWRCB Drinking Water Program](#)
California State Water Project, [Information](#)

[U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Current Conditions throughout the Region
[U.S. Drought Portal](#), National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)
National Weather Service [Climate Predictor Center](#)
USDA Drought Designations by County [CA County Designations](#)
USDA Disaster and Drought Assistance Information [USDA Programs](#)
U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance Office